

### Faithful Follower or Fairweather Fan? – Luke 9:23-27

Welcome; Rob Willey; Glad you've chosen to worship w/ us on Back to Church *Weekend*  
Especially so, since this is the launch of a new ministry year  
A time of anticipation, renewed excitement, and the introduction of a new *theme*, or emphasis for the year

Which you can see from your bulletin, is **Faithful Follower or Fairweather Fan?**

That's our theme and emphasis this year, coming from Lk 9:23 where Jesus says . . .

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.* [USE FOR SEGMENT BELOW]

That's our theme verse for the year, and I'm hoping that God will do a transforming work in each and every one of you, as a result of our focus on it (Lk 9:23-27; **Intro**)

- I grew up the youngest of 3 brothers, and among other things, we were heavily involved in sports – it wasn't the only thing, but it was a biggie  
And my parents were hard core fans – not in an obnoxious sort of way . . .  
But rain or shine, win or lose – they were there; They were Faithful Followers

In fact, I remember one time, we were at my brother's freshman football game  
And it was raining so hard, that despite our rain ponchos, our plastic sheets, our umbrellas, and our coats – we were soaked to the bone; but *there we were*  
Not only that, but the stands were completely empty except for us

And I'm absolutely certain, that had they not called the game on account of lightning, we'd have stayed to end – b/c we were *fanatics*  
Faithful followers who could do no other, b/c that's what Faithful Followers do

And the same s/b true of us when it comes to knowing and following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior  
We too s/b Faithful Followers; The furthest thing from Fairweather Fans, and the very thing that Jesus spoke of in Lk 9:23-24, where Luke writes, **referring to Jesus . . .**

- The first phrase in v23, *if anyone would come after me*, is Jesus' way of saying – “if anyone wants to be my *disciple*”  
Meaning, if anyone wants to know me, and know what I know . . .  
If anyone wants to do what I do, and be like I am . . .  
If anyone wants to be a *Faithful Follower* of mine, Jesus says, here's how you do it  
*Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

Then, in v24-26, he tells us *why* you'd want to do so  
3 reasons why you'd want to be a Faithful Follower instead of a Fairweather Fan (24-26)  
[DON'T READ V24-26]

And then he says in v27 . . .

IOW having just said in v26 that some people will be Fairweather Fans, ashamed of Jesus – others will be Faithful Followers  
In fact, there were some standing there as he spoke  
People who would see the K of G before they saw death

Which most likely refers to the transfiguration that followed 8 days later in v28-36  
That's where Peter, James, and John went up on a mountain to pray with Jesus . . .

And not only saw his appearance change to that of dazzling white . . .

But also saw him talking with Moses and Elijah

It was a glimpse of what the K of G will be like when Jesus returns in all his glory to complete it

And his mention of it in v27, was a way of giving hope to his hearers, including us, that it's not only *possible* to be a Faithful Follower, but the **rewards are amazing**

But it requires that you first, surrender all

**Faithful Followers surrender all . . . (v23)**

They give it up; Jesus said in v23 – *If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself*

Let him put his or her interests second

Let him surrender all *his* wants, and all *his* desires – to the wants and desires of Jesus

*Let him deny himself*

Even if that means giving up the comfort and ease of the American Dream? Yes

Even if that means parting company w/ family or friends who oppose you every step of the way? Yes

That's what Faithful Followers do – they surrender *all* to Jesus

Just like we sang earlier – all to Jesus, I surrender, all to him I freely give

- Including control of your life  
If you're going to be a Faithful Follower, it's not just Jesus take the wheel when you hit a rough spot . . .  
It's Jesus take the keys, Jesus take the Garmin, and Jesus take the car itself  
And not just some of the time, but *all* the time

Faithful Followers die to *their* will, and live for God's

Faithful Followers step *off* their throne, and put *God* on it

Faithful Followers yield to *his* desires as found in the Bible, and relinquish their own

That's what he means by *let him deny himself*

Faithful Followers surrender all, while . . .

**Fairweather Fans give sparingly (v24)**

And I'm not just talking about money

Certainly that's included, but whether it's time, talent, effort, *or* treasure – Fairweather

Fans give just enough of themselves to get by

Just enough time to the church to ease their conscience

Just enough effort to keep up appearances

And just enough money to feel good about themselves

Far from surrendering everything, they give **sparingly**, if at all

Which I think this video illustrates as good as any – take a look (**Video – The Stool**)

- Fairweather Fans give sparingly, if at all  
**And in the** process, expend an enormous amount of mental/emotional energy to *keep* it all, don't they  
Which is not only a losing battle, but according to Jesus, it's self-defeating

That's the idea of **v24**

If you give sparingly of yourself, if you hold tightly to your life in order to preserve it just the way it is – you’ll end up losing it  
You’ll end up missing out on God’s *best* now, and suffering *Satan’s worst* later  
It’s a self-defeating proposition

But whoever loses their life, whoever surrenders *all* for the sake of Christ and his kingdom – will save it  
Enjoying the benefits of Christ’s work on the cross *now*, as well as later  
Now, with life to the full, and later **with life forever**  
Now, full of forgiveness, and grace, and mercy; Peace, love, joy, and hope . . .  
And later, with God and his people in heaven, forever

- **All of which** means, that keepers are losers, and givers are winners  
IOW in the end, keepers, Fairweather Fans, end up losing the very thing they’re trying to preserve . . .  
While givers, Faithful Followers, end up gaining the very thing they surrender

The question is – which are you? Faithful Follower or **Fairweather Fan?**  
Do you surrender *all*, or give sparingly?

Second . . .

**Faithful Followers buckle down . . . (v23)**

Or as v23 says it – they *take up* [their] *cross daily* (23)  
IOW let him buckle down and do what God wants – every single day  
Even if it’s a burden; Even if it’s something you don’t particularly want to do

That’s the idea of a cross here – it’s a burden or responsibility that God puts or allows in your life, to carry or endure  
It could be a chronic sickness, a severely disabled child, a dying parent . . .  
Or, a difficult person to love, or maybe a temptation to overcome, or a ministry to fulfill

Your cross could be as simple as leading your family in a God-honoring way . . .  
Or as complicated as leading the way to change your workplace  
It could be fulfilling your calling to become a cross-cultural missionary . . .  
Or making it your mission to bring the cross to your culture

Whatever the case, a cross is any burden to carry or responsibility to accomplish, that God puts in your life or lays on your heart  
And if you’re a Faithful Follower, you’ll buckle down and get after it, **every single day**

Despite the fact, that . . .

**Fairweather Fans give up (v25)**

Instead of buckling down to do all that God wants, they give up  
They give up on their responsibilities as husbands and wives, or moms and dads . . .  
They give up on their callings as pastors and leaders . . .  
And they give up on their opp’s as citizens and neighbors

Instead of taking up their cross and buckling down, Fairweather Fans buckle under and give up  
But not on *their* desires mind you, or *their* goals; just God’s

And that’s a problem b/c v25 says – *What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?*

What good does it do to accomplish *your* goals, while forsaking *God’s*?

None; It does you no good

It profits a Fairweather Fan who gives up on carrying his cross, absolutely nothing . . .

While costing him absolutely everything

You could be the most successful business man this side of the Mississippi, but if you fail to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – you lose  
You could be the best boss your workplace has ever seen . . .  
But if you fail to love to your wife and lead your family – what good is it?  
You could have the biggest bank account in the state, but if you fail to use it for the Lord, you profit nothing  
In fact, you risk losing **your own soul**; Here’s part 2 of that video (**Video – Comfort**)

- **How about you?** Are you a Faithful Follower or a Fairweather Fan?  
Do you buckle down to do all that God wants, each and every day?  
Or do you make a habit of giving up and staying comfortable?  
I hope not; B/c the consequences are grave

**Faithful Followers** surrender all, buckle down, and last . . .

**Faithful Followers follow through (v23) . . .**

That’s the last part of v23

If you consider the first century practice of students literally following rabbis around the countryside . . .  
Spending every waking moment with them in both formal and informal education . . .  
And soaking up every tidbit of wisdom, every kernel of truth, and every nuance of understanding . . .  
You get the idea of Jesus’ statement here with the words *follow me*

It was his way of saying, “If you’re going to be my disciple, if you’re going to be my Faithful Follower – then step up and follow through”  
“Lip service isn’t going to cut it; You have to walk your talk”  
“You have to be my *constant* companion,” Jesus was saying . . .  
“Otherwise you’ll never know me, and I’ll never know you”

Faithful Followers follow through on their **decision to follow Jesus**

Meanwhile . . .

**Fairweather Fans flake out (v26)**

**Faithful Followers** follow through, while Fairweather Fans flake out

Which is usually an indicator that they were half-hearted in their decision to follow Christ in the first place . . .  
And therefore they *continue* to be half-hearted in their following  
Drawing near when it’s convenient or when they’re desperate, but definitely not consistently or faithfully out **of love for him**

Which is why you can’t depend on a Fairweather Fan for anything else – whether it’s serving, praying, loving, giving, or worshipping . . .  
Having flaked out with Jesus, they flake out with others

- But the worst part, is that they're ashamed of him  
Fairweather Fans are often ashamed of the one they profess to follow  
They don't want to be seen *following* him . . .  
They don't want to be seen with *others* who follow him . . .  
And they don't want to be perceived as one of those Bible thumpers – who does what it says  
They're ashamed of him and his words, and flake out b/c of it

Which is another big problem, b/c Jesus says in v26 . . .  
IOW if you're a Fairweather Fan who's ashamed of Jesus *now*, he'll be ashamed of you *later*  
Later when he returns in all his glory, to receive his Faithful Followers unto himself  
In which case you'll be a bystander just like you are now, with no second chance

You see, following Jesus is not like Burger King where you can have it *your* way  
You can't be a Fairweather Fan *now*, flaking out in your allegiance to him . . .  
And expect that he will receive you *later* as a Faithful Follower  
It doesn't work that way  
God's grace is amazing, but you can't abuse it and get away with it forever

- So the question remains? Are you a Faithful Follower or Fairweather Fan? \*\*\*\*\*  
Do you surrender *all*, or give sparingly?  
Do you buckle down, or give up?  
Do you follow *through*, or flake out?

I hope it's the former; And if it's not, I hope you make it right today  
I hope you make a commitment right now to *faithfully* follow Jesus from now on  
Never again flaking out or giving up – but surrendering all, and buckling down, and following through

I'm going to give you an opp to do that as we go to The Lord's Table in a minute  
To confess your fair-weather sinfulness, ask his forgiveness, and make a commitment to surrender everything  
Otherwise, you shouldn't take communion at **The Lord's Table**

- If you're not a Faithful Follower of Jesus Christ . . .  
If you haven't repented of your sin and trusted him to save you – let the bread/cup pass  
And take the time to reflect on what's *preventing* you from surrendering to him, and buckling down, and following through

B/c the Bible says that if you eat/drink without considering your worthiness to participate, you'll be guilty of showing disrespect and irreverence toward God  
And risk bringing judgment on yourself

But if Jesus *is* your Savior and Lord, even if you pray with me right now for the very first time – join us  
You don't have to be a member here, just a believer; a Faithful Follower

- Let's pray